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28 December 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

THROUGH : Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Semi-Annual Report of Records Management Board

1. This report is for your information only.
2. During the past six months the Records Board members have had their component Records Officers emphasize three major areas: (a) Control of Records Volume Growth, (b) Development of Retention Plans for Permanent Records, and (c) Increased use of Microform Systems.
3. In those three major areas the plans and potential as well as the progress and problems are as follows:

a. Campaign to Limit Records Storage:

To prolong the storage-capacity life of the Agency Records Center, gained by the 3-year records purge and installation of high density moveable shelving, the Board devised a self-limiting storage growth system. Each Directorate was asked to restrict its net growth to 1,000 feet the first year and in each succeeding year to regularly reduce the total net limit by another 50 feet per year. The proposed system was accepted by Management and has been successfully implemented Agencywide.

During this first six months of the new Limited Storage Policy all Directorates are well within their projected annual limits and most have managed to maintain an actual volume reduction. A related system to control records volumes in the offices has been implemented and requests for the procurement of records equipment are being monitored by Senior Officers in each Directorate.

b. Identification of Offices of Record:

During these six months considerable progress was made in the campaign to identify the more valuable permanent records of the Agency as well as to list the Offices responsible for the initial preservation of those files. As usual, the component Records Officer must be called upon to implement the plan. The files involved must be identified at the using component level. The findings are then coordinated at Office, Directorate, and Agency levels to eliminate duplication and establish each official office of record for specific files. Board members have met with their component Records Managers to provide instructions, forms, and procedures for this Agencywide campaign.

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The plans and potential for both the Storage Limitation and Offices of Record Retention Plans are closely related and were the subjects of the two-day, December Conference of Agency Records Officers. The feasibility and need for the campaigns were generally recognized by the Conferees and they developed several proposals to implement the plans. They cited the advantages of a full records inventory, tightly scheduled disposition, and of published lists of offices of record responsible for certain Agency documentation. They felt such information would result in the elimination of duplicate recordskeeping, lower the file volumes in offices and the Records Center, and improve the service for storage and retrieval.

The Conferees were equally candid in citing the problems they face with these campaigns and the rest of the Records Program. They are faced with other duties and priorities in their components. They have little or no time left to complete the records surveys, research, and coordination necessary to inventory files, lower scheduled retention periods, and improve records systems. They foresee a need for considerable time to list all the valuable files and to negotiate, sometimes across Directorate lines, among the several offices interested in particular types of records and to get agreement for one component to serve as an office of record.

Several Conferees noted that the success of the Records Purge grew from the announced interest of Top Management which adjusted component priorities and provided the time and manpower needed. The component Records Officers asked for similar expressions of interest for the Storage Limitations and the Office of Record Retention Plans. The Board members believe the memorandum of 1 July 1971 from the Executive Director-Comptroller to the DDS on the Records Storage Control Policy indicates strong management support for these two campaigns and the Board will refer to this accordingly. We expect completion of these Retention Plans in several components during the next six months.

c. Increased Use of Microform Systems:

Each member of the Records Management Board reports new microform systems being established and operating in his Directorate.

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In the Support Directorate a systems analyst has been assigned full time in the Support Services Staff to work exclusively on Agency microfilm activities. This effort also brought in for 15 days a consultant of microfilming for various equipment and systems needs and has provided microfilm training seminars that were attended by 14 DDS office heads, 51 DDS managerial personnel, and 35 users of microform systems. Significant progress was completed in the Office of Finance microfilming program permitting the destruction of hundreds of feet of old paper records. Similarly, microfilm projects are underway or being developed in the Offices of Communications, Logistics, Medical Services, Personnel, Security, and Training. DDS component Records Officers estimate that some four hundred feet of files converted to microfilm soon will be removed and destroyed.

The DDP representative to the Board reports that during this reporting period approximately 400 feet of old applicant files were microfilmed and the old files destroyed. Likewise, 40 feet of files at [REDACTED] were converted to film and the hard copy destroyed as part of a pilot program. Other microform studies are underway in [REDACTED] as well as for the [REDACTED] at Headquarters. Another study resulted in plans to change the size microform to be used for a CS file system.

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In the DDS&T microfilm activities were reported in six components and involved disposal of another eleven feet of files, the leasing of a highspeed rotoline camera, and purchase of reader/printer equipment. Seven more DDS&T employees received microfilm training. The DDI continues its major microfilm program in Central Reference Service and is studying other possible applications. In the DCI Area the Cable Secretariat reports having completed the microfilming of all its cable files except those of the last six months. Five DCI Area personnel attended the microfilm seminar.

At the December Records Conference several Conferees cited microforms as a method to reduce records volumes when cost justified. They also pointed out that our dynamic Agency will continue to have large volumes of paper files as well as many new types of records media with related problems.

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They specifically noted the rapidly increasing volumes of magnetic tapes, NPIC films, and growing collections of microfilm files which, although smaller than the original records, will have to be filed somehow in the future.

4. Besides these major concerns the Board members and component Records Officers continued to implement controls in other elements of the Records Program. For example:

- a. Recent DDP reviews have obsoleted 40 forms, DDS&T records disposition permitted return of 17 safes to supply for reissue, new DDI controls over printing and distribution of Agency reports eliminated from the volume of extra copies some 700 feet of excess material, and a review of the emergency Vital Records eliminated 100 feet from the DDP and 700 feet from the DDI collections. In the DDS a concurrence was obtained from DDP to dispose of thousands of feet of field station accounting files more than 12 years old. The agreement culminated ten years of effort to establish a retention period which meets General Accounting Office legal standards, Office of Finance requirements, and satisfies the needs of other users of financial records.
- b. During this period the annual inventory of office files was completed and showed a volume of 236,200 cubic feet in the Headquarters area. This is an increase of about 25,000 feet over last year. There were small increases in most Directorates but the major increase of almost 16,000 feet is due to a more comprehensive physical inventory in CRS/DDI which included areas not previously reported. The Board expects to continue uncovering new records problems and other uninventoried areas. At this point we can be certain only that the size of the problems reflected by office holdings are as large as reported and not any smaller.
- c. Besides the almost quarter million feet of active office files and reference materials there is some 89,000 feet of semi-active material stored in the Agency Archives and Records Center. In this volume there was a net reduction of 1,200 cubic feet in the last six months.

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- d. The Board members also coordinated on the operating procedures for the proposed regulation on an Agency Archives, but they are obliged to defer to Directorate management on the personnel and policy requirements of this new Archives function.

5. Finally, the Records Management Board reconsidered its own status and future. Two meetings were held and the continuing need for this Board was re-evaluated. We found that three members (DDI, DDS, and DDS&T) favored continuing the Board because they consider the records purge and study of other records problems to be continuing requirements for Board action. They also feel the Board strengthens their administration of their Directorate Programs as well as their supervision of component Records Officers. The DDP representative favors discontinuing the Board as not necessary for the DDP Records Program. The DCI representative felt the Board should be redrafted and not continued as presently constituted because it gives management the impression of a greater problem solving mechanism than actually is possible in this Board without any staff or authority. The Chairman recommends continuation of the Board because it requires a direct report of Records Program problems and progress to management and this, he feels, has stimulated greater coordinated participation at all organizational levels for this relatively low priority program. Although the majority favors continuation of the Board, the members concluded that the final decision will rest with the Executive Director-Comptroller based upon the needs of the DDS who is responsible for the overall Agency Records Program.


Chairman

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CIA Records Management Board

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